ethical approach which has the aspiration of being universally justified. The former cannot vindicate our conviction that outsiders matter morally. The latter simply represents the traditional view Copp had seemed to want to challenge. (However, Copp might say in reply to this latter horn of the dilemma, that his view remains distinct from familiar universalistic accounts of morality, in that it offers a different account of what makes it the case that the universal perspective is the ethically relevant perspective.) The search for middle ground here seems to me a fruitful area of inquiry.

There are important criticisms to be made of Copp's book, as there are of every important and daring philosophy book I know. Copp offers powerful insights into how traditional accounts of rationality and morality might be usefully challenged. Any philosophically inclined reader will be glad for the time they spent with Copp. Anyone interested in issues of meta-ethics, rationality or normative ethics would do well to wrestle with his singular vision.

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Value Judgement. Improving Our Ethical Beliefs, JAMES GRIFFIN. Oxford University Press, 1996, 180 + xii pages.

This book covers a wide range of issues in methodology, meta-ethics and normative ethics. It starts off with the methodological questions: how can ethical beliefs be justified, and, are there any ethical beliefs of high credibility? In the non-ethical realm perceptual beliefs might be considered to be beliefs of high reliability. Is there an analogue to perceptual beliefs in the ethical domain? This raises the meta-ethical question of whether there is, as moral realists think, an independent moral reality that can be perceived by us – whether there is anything that can be discovered in the domain of values. Griffin discusses this question by focusing first on what he calls prudential values. He starts with prudential values, a) because he thinks they are easier to deal with than moral values, and b) because the distinction between prudential and moral values is not a sharp one.

Griffin distinguishes between two models of what is valuable for us. On the one hand, there is the *taste model* according to which objects are valuable because they are desired. We desire certain objects because of the biological and psychological features we have. By desiring certain

objects we respond in a positive way to the natural properties these objects have. On the other hand, there is the *perception model* according to which objects are desired because they are valuable. We recognize that they are valuable and we therefore desire them.

Griffin rejects the taste model. First of all, it is just too simple. Someone might have a 'crazy aim in life – say, counting the blades of grass in various lawns' (p. 22). He might be fully informed about what it means to do this and fully aware of the other possible aims he could pursue in life. Yet, we would still have no reason to consider that counting blades of grass was a valuable activity, an activity enhancing his life. Secondly, the taste model assumes that we respond to objects we could describe in completely natural terms. But Griffin thinks that this is not possible. By desiring something we do not just respond to the natural properties of an object; rather, we respond to the recognition of desirability features. Griffin gives us the following example: 'We bring what I am calling "accomplishment" into focus only by resorting to such terms as "giving life weight or point", and such language already organizes our experience by selecting what we see favourably' (p. 25).

What about the perception model? Griffin is more sympathetic to this model than to the taste model, but he does not really embrace it. On his view, the perception model is somehow over-simplified. Of course, we desire objects because of the valuable properties they have. But then, as Griffin argues, we would not see certain properties as valuable if we did not have certain desires. Thus, a certain object is neither desired just because it is valuable nor valuable just because it is desired. Recognition of value and responding to natural properties are indistinguishable.

Is there really some truth in the taste model? It might be true that we would not see something as valuable if we did not have certain desires. But it does not follow from this that something is valuable because it is desired. Griffin rightly thinks that the recognition of value is linked to the recognition of reasons for action. What is valuable provides us with practical reasons. But Griffin thinks that practical reasons depend on human motivation. '[A] practical reason has to mesh with characteristic human motivation ... they are reasons only because they incorporate a movement of the human will' (p. 35). Thus, the perception of reasons is guided by our own will.

This can mean different things, either, a) I only have a reason to do x if I am motivated to do so, or, b) a reason for action can only be something that could motivate me to act (it does not have to motivate me now, but it could, provided I deliberated rationally). a) would be highly implausible. I might have a desire to do x, without having at the same time a reason to do so. I have a desire to smoke. But I could at the same time hold the view that I do not have a reason to do so; b) is something a

reason only if it is capable of motivating me? I do not think that this is the case. I can recognize that I have a reason to do x without being motivated to act in the appropriate way. This applies for instance to the akratic person who acts against his better judgement. But it also applies to all who are not suffering from weakness of will. Consider the following: X is a good film. It is funny and entertaining. Thus there are reasons to go and watch this film. But I might not have a desire to do so. I do not deny that there are reasons to watch this film. But there are reasons to do many things and it is just impossible for me to do all of them. So I am not interested in watching film X, I am interested in doing other things I have reason to want and to do.

Now Griffin might argue that I cannot have evaluative beliefs without having the corresponding desires. But I cannot see why this should be impossible. I can say, 'Climbing mountains is a good thing, it's pleasurable and challenging'. Still, I do not want to do it myself because I have other projects I would like to pursue. There is nothing wrong with my evaluative belief. I think that climbing mountains is a valuable activity without having a desire to do so. Reasons are provided by certain facts, such as the fact that something is challenging, funny and so on. Thus, reasons do not have to mesh with human motivation in order to be reasons. That is to say, they are there and they can be recognized without having the corresponding desires or motives. If so, there is no truth in the taste model. It should be given up in favour of the perception model. If so, judgements about reasons to want and to act can be literally true or false; and as a consequence the same applies to judgements about what is valuable and not valuable.

Let me come back to the question of whether certain ethical beliefs have a high credibility. Griffin thinks that judgements about prudential values can be, as he puts it, correct. The same holds for simple moral judgements such as, 'That is cruel'. This is not just a descriptive judgement; it also gives us a reason not to act in a certain way. We could not understand what it means to be cruel without understanding its badness. To call something cruel is not evaluating natural properties of actions, it is rather recognizing the badness of something out there. As Griffin puts it: 'To understand "pain" involves regarding it as a disvalue. One cannot delineate the concept of "pain" in terms of Humean natural facts, and only then look for a response to it' (p. 80). This is the reason Griffin thinks that judgements such as, 'It is wrong to be cruel', are specially reliable. And thus it is quite natural to think that our ethical beliefs should be justified by reference to judgements of this kind. But according to Griffin, those specially reliable judgements will not get us very far in justifying ethical beliefs. In particular, we will not get a system of justified ethical beliefs. We cannot start with specially reliable ethical beliefs and end up with a fundamental principle, or set of

fundamental principles, that all ethical beliefs could be based on. Of course, systems of ethical beliefs have been put forward by moral philosophers. Griffin discusses utilitarianism, deontology and virtue ethics as examples. On his view, they all fail. Take, for instance, utilitarianism. Utilitarians think that morality is all about the impartial maximization of goodness. This is seen by some utilitarians as the fundamental action-guiding principle and by others as the fundamental criterion of rightness of actions. According to Griffin, it should be seen as neither. On his view, utilitarianism is not a moral theory for human beings for the following two reasons. First, there are the limits of will. We are not able to live a life as impartial maximizers. Such an ideal is incompatible with deep commitments to other persons or the pursuit of personal projects – things which make our life valuable. Of course, we could in a certain sense be impartial maximizers, giving up deep commitments and personal projects. But we would then live extremely impoverished lives. Thus, we cannot expect people to become the kind of people utilitarians want them to be. Second, there are the limits of knowledge: we are often unable to predict the consequences of our actions. Of course, we can try to assign probabilities to possible outcomes. But Griffin thinks that even this is in many cases beyond our capacities. Thus we are often not able to apply the utilitarian principle. On Griffin's view, this problem cannot be solved by an indirect form of utilitarianism, according to which the utilitarian principle should be seen as a principle for selecting rules and norms to which we should adhere. The question then is: which rules and norms would promote goodness the most? Again, Griffin believes that the calculation which is needed to answer this question is beyond our reach. As a consequence, the utilitarian criterion of rightness cannot play a role, or at any rate not an important role, in our moral life. This is a good reason for Griffin to give up utilitarianism.

But then deontology as well as virtue ethics are also programmes in ethics which cannot be carried out. No plausible justification of deontological constraints on maximizing goodness has ever been given. And no plausible justification seems to be available. Virtue ethics has a similar problem: virtues are desirable dispositions. But how can we decide which dispositions are desirable? Griffin thinks that this question cannot be answered. Thus, virtue ethics fails in the same way as deontology and utilitarianism.

Griffin sees the alternative in a sort of common-sense morality which is tailored to our capacities, that is, to the limits of will as well as to the limits of knowledge. This common-sense morality is not too demanding. And, in addition, it is a morality which leaves many moral problems open. It merely entails a few determinate moral norms of high reliability, such as: don't deliberately kill the innocent, or limit the damage.

The upshot of all this seems to be that a system in ethics is impossible. The ambitions most moral philosophers still have are therefore too high. Now utilitarianism, deontology and virtue ethics might be inadequate moral theories for different reasons. But why, in general, should a system in ethics be impossible? According to Griffin, a system is not available because of what guides our moral life. In particular, he believes that a system in ethics is incompatible with an adequate idea of human agency. 'Moral life must be a life that the likes of us can lead' (p. 112). But this might just be a problem for utilitarianism; it does not have to be one for deontology, and it is certainly not one for virtue ethics, which is indeed tailored to our human capacities, more so than we might wish. And, in additon to this, if certain facts about us guide our moral life in ways which cannot be changed, then this has to be taken into account by utilitarianism. First of all, 'ought implies can' applies to all moral theories. Moreover, if morality is about making the world as good a place as possible, agents should not be urged to live extremely impoverished lives. Thus, there must be room for deep commitments and the pursuit of personal projects. The utilitarian rules and norms have to fit human capacities. Of course, Griffin could still argue that calculating which rules and norms will most promote goodness is beyond our reach. But the limits of knowledge are a common phenomenon. We can seldom be sure what the consequences of our actions will be. Still, we might reasonably aim at maximizing expected goodness. Griffin doubts whether this is always possible because we are sometimes unable to assign probabilities to possible outcomes. This objection holds only if there is such a thing as objective probability. This had to be shown in the first place. But even if there were objective probabilities, we could always work with subjective probabilities in those cases where objective probabilities were not available.

Griffin argues that systems in ethics wrongly assume that there is a unifying procedure of solving moral problems. He thinks that such a procedure does not exist because our moral norms arise in different ways to meet different practical requirements. Morality is, for instance, not just about maximizing well-being or about respecting persons. This can easily be accepted by a deontology which bases morality not on one unique principle, but rather – like Ross's pluralist deontology – on a set of fundamental principles. It can also be accepted by virtue ethics according to which a moral person acts upon different virtues such as, justice and benevolence. And the same applies to a pluralistic consequentialist, who thinks that we should maximize over different values such as well-being, fairness, and honesty. She can also agree that moral norms have to meet different practical requirements.

Griffin thinks that there is another difficulty with such systems in ethics: they all adhere wrongly to the 'myth of the morally right answer'

(p. 116). That is to say, they all assume that there is always, in principle, a right answer to moral questions. Do we have to reject this idea? I think it depends on what we mean by 'the right answer'. Suppose we have to choose between two options. We compare the values of these two options and we reach the conclusion that neither option is better than the other. Which one shall we go for? There seems to be no answer to this question. But, if neither option is better than the other, and if they are not of equal value, then it would seem to be right, having thought about the value of the options, to toss a coin or do something similar. Thus, even in this case, where we are not able to come up with an overall value-judgement that 'x is better than y', there seems to be a right answer as to what we should do. The difficulty is not that we cannot always have a right answer; the difficulty is rather that we might not always be able to rank the value of the options. But even though that might be the case, we could still defend, for instance, a pluralistic consequentialism. The possibility of indeterminate value-judgements would only then become a real problem for a pluralistic consequentialism if all, or at least most, value-judgements were indeterminate ('x is neither better than y nor are they of equal value'). But this has to be shown. As long as that has not been done systems in ethics, such as a pluralistic consequentialism (as well as different forms of deontology and virtue ethics) are not threatened by the indeterminacy of value-judgements.

Griffin's book raises important questions. It is stimulating and thought-provoking. It shows the difficulties we are still facing in trying to set up an adequate moral theory. Yet, I think some may still not be convinced that all hope of a system in ethics have to be given up.

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Contested Commodities: The trouble with Trade in Sex, Children, Body Parts, and Other Things, MARGARET JANE RADIN. Harvard University Press, 1996, xiv + 279 pages.

Should we worry about the sale of objects and services – body organs, sexual favours, the use of one's womb, and one's very self into slavery – which are parts or attributes of the person (I shall henceforth just call these 'personal attributes')? Two radically opposed answers are given. On the one hand there is the view of the market as a sphere in which